

# Will Your Life 'Really Matter' During 1995?

As one year ends and another begins, my mind has been rambling all over, picking at memories triggered by sounds, smells and other associations. It would be easy to become disheartened as I watch the news, listen to the sirens screaming late in the night and begin thinking that the world is becoming a meaner place than even I, a hard-bitten newswoman, can stand.

Random violence occurs even in rural areas like our own, often propelled by enslavement to a powerful and evil addiction to drugs or alcohol.

More and more criminals blame their antisocial and illegal behavior on the past, some missing element in their own less than perfect childhoods, and expect us to buy it.

We can sympathize, but we should know better. There are too many inspiring stories of men and women of all races and nationalities who rose above the meanest of surroundings, who rose above the terrors of their pasts and became exciting role models for the rest of us.

A few criminals even expect us to buy the idea they shouldn't be



Susan Usher

punished for crimes committed while under the influence of drugs, that they couldn't help it. Give me a break. They chose to use the drug, a

crime in itself, didn't they? Wouldn't it be more appropriate to penalize them for both, and to throw in drug rehabilitation too?

At 40-plus I still believe that government can help people and communities help themselves through programs like Head Start, WIC and VISTA.

I believe even more strongly that individuals can and do make the most difference. None of us should write off the future as something we have no part in, because we would be wrong.

Thank goodness there are lead-

ers, visionaries and heroes among us. Individuals who care so deeply that they have no choice but to act on their convictions.

I'm thinking about Robert Quinn's push to protect a neighborhood from mining, Lori Bates' fight for better care for preschoolers, Eugene Tomlinson's advocacy for better stewardship of our precious coastal environment, as well as the less visible fights, such as Katherine Shawver's drive to improve the lives of the downtrodden and defeated and give them hope, and a cousin's commitment to being a

good parent and a good daughter. 1994 has come and is almost gone. It hasn't been a perfect year. However, it has carried forward for another time the seeds of hope, the examples of goodness, the possibilities for change because there are those who act in love and mercy out of their faith.

As for you and me, we can sit back and complain, make excuses and criticize those who try.

Or we can choose to try living, as writer Danny Morris suggests, "a life that really matters."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### N.C. Intangibles, Property Taxes Vex 'Transplanted Long Islander'

To the editor:  
We have been residents of Fairway Villas at Carolina Shores, Calabash (transplanted Long Islanders) for a little over three years. We like it very much and we have friends who moved here from Long Island and have made many more friends. However, there are two things that bother us very much—the personal property tax and the intangibles tax.

Why are we charged (in 1994) \$89.13 for owning a 1990 Oldsmobile 98 with 66,000 miles on the odometer? We can't afford a new car without taking out an equity loan, and I spent over \$1,700 in 1994 to keep it running. If you don't have a car, you must walk. How come there is no personal property tax on footwear?

Regarding the intangibles tax, it is onerous and taxes money or investments that have been saved for retirement living. I know of no tax that assesses unrealized gains or losses. What is more unfair is that you don't have to pay on investments that are with North Carolina domiciled companies or less if a national company has offices or manufacturing in this state.

State Commerce Secretary Dave Phillips (recently said) "climate and tax structure is luring new business to the state, and not a lack of unions and low-paid work force." He said all this while unveiling an advertising campaign to lure business to the state.

If he has anything in the campaign about the intangibles tax, he won't succeed.

We didn't know about the intangibles tax and personal property tax when we moved here, and lots of others didn't either; however, the first thing we tell people interested in moving to the state is, "Beware the intangibles tax and personal property tax."

It is totally unfair (even the court has upheld its legality), particularly

on seniors who are depending on the interest payments (which are subject to state income tax) to stay afloat and, as I stated before, (is) a tax on the total investment and unrealized gain. Of course if there is an unrealized loss, the state suffers and the taxpayers suffers twice.

Michael T. Abbene  
Calabash

#### Likes Color Photos

To the editor:  
We look forward to receiving *The Brunswick Beacon* every week. Since we are unable to spend all of our time at our beach cottage, we appreciate your keeping us informed on happenings.

Lately we have especially enjoyed the pictures that are printed in color. Your photographers are quite good and should be congratulated.

Our favorite column is by Bill Faver. We look forward to his special essays with personal photographs each week.

We are pleased to renew our subscription for 1995 and send our thanks for the enjoyment you have given us in the past.

Franda and Phil Pedlow  
Richmond, Va.

#### No Answers, Just Taxes

To the editor:  
Our commissioners who were voted in to represent all the people equally changed the original capital improvement bond for the installation of the water lines for all residents at Shallotte Point and only gave it to a certain area. The Go Water Bond should have been designated to all, not just a certain area. This is an act of discrimination to the rest of us landowners, voters and taxpayers of Shallotte Point.

Our county has always stood for democracy (which is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people. I, for one, have a 70-foot lot which has been

assessed at \$736.03 plus \$475 hook-on fee equals \$1,211.03. For that same section of 70-foot pipe, the man living on the other side of the dirt road opposite of me has to pay \$1,211.03, the total equal, for 70 foot of pipe \$2,422.06. It think that's high.

There are 24 lots on my road; 24 times \$736.03 equals \$17,664.72, not counting the hook-on fees. Are we paying for those who the commissioners gave the bond? The Utility Commission had the right of way to lay the lines whether people wanted it or not. Only certain residents are being forced to pay.

At the tax office, liens have already been placed upon the land owned by people who cannot afford these rates. This is discrimination in that some people pay and some don't.

Who will pay the cost of the sewer system? The ones who didn't pay for the water?

At the meeting it did no good to go; the ones asking questions got no answers and we've still got none—only more taxes.

Dorothy Shea  
Shallotte Point

#### Write Us

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters must have an original signature and must include your address and telephone number. (This information is for verification purposes only; we will not publish your street/mailling address or phone number.) Letters must be typed or written legibly. Address letters to:  
The Brunswick Beacon  
P.O. Box 2558  
Shallotte NC 28459  
Anonymous letters will not be published.

## Budget, Mining Proposal Among County's '94 Battles

(Continued From Page 1-A)

of County Manager Wyman Yelton during his recovery from injuries suffered in a car accident. Interim Manager Charles McGinnis was the former county manager of Cabarrus, Catawba and Gaston counties.

Brunswick county was invited to join three other area counties in a regional high-tech garbage disposal system that would eliminate the need for a local landfill while recycling much of the waste and burning most of the rest for fuel. The county is still negotiating with officials of the "BCH Energy Project," who are building the waste-to-energy system outside Fayetteville.

#### Libraries Built, Improved

Two new branches of the Brunswick County Library system were opened in Leland and on Oak Island as work began on renovations to the Shallotte and Southport Branches. The friends of West Brunswick Library raised money, located a building and provided volunteers to keep a temporary library open while the Shallotte branch was closed. The newly expanded facility is scheduled to re-open Jan. 9.

In June, a federal judge dismissed a racial discrimination lawsuit filed by former county Clerk Regina Alexander, saying the commissioners enjoyed legislative immunity when they eliminated her paid position from the budget. Later that month, Alexander re-filed her suit in state courts.

#### Funding Fight Begins

Opening shots were fired in a dispute between the commissioners and the school board over school funding as 150 people turned out for a public hearing on the proposed county budget. The commissioners eventually approved a spending

package that did not increase taxes, but gave the schools \$4.5 million less than was requested in their budget.

Commissioner Jerry Jones resigned from the county planning board after fellow commissioners called for a comprehensive study to identify "inconsistencies" in the zoning law that Jones helped create. He later agreed to retain his planning board seat following a vote of confidence from the other commissioners.

Unable to reach a compromise over the amount of money needed to run the schools, Brunswick commissioners and board of education members faced off in court. A jury awarded the school board the full amount it requested in its budget. The commissioners have appealed the verdict, claiming it would require a 10-cent increase in local property taxes to fund the schools at that level.

#### Central Permitting Begins

In mid-September the long proposed central permitting office was opened at the county complex in Bolivia. The facility provides a "one-stop shopping" place where residents can obtain all the necessary approvals they need for building a new home or business.

#### Martin-Marietta Sues

Martin Marietta Aggregates followed through with its promise to sue Brunswick County over the law enacted in January that prevented the company from opening its proposed limestone quarry near Southport. The lawsuit asks the court to either declare the mining law void or to make the county reimburse the company for some or all of the money it claims to have spent on the project.

Republicans and Democrats, in-

cumbents and challengers were elected to the county board of commissioners in November. Former one-term Chairman Don Warren and fellow Democrat Wayland Vereen were unseated by former Calabash Mayor Douglas Simmons and political newcomer Leslie Collier, who became the first Republican woman ever named to the board. Veteran member Jerry Jones retained his seat to form a Republican majority, despite the defeat of incumbent Donald Shaw by Democrat Bill Sue. Also returned to office was Democrat Tom Rabon.

#### Last-Minute Spending

The outgoing commissioners went on a last-meeting spending spree, appropriating \$338,827 for various departments, projects, agencies and volunteer fire and rescue squads. The new board appointed Commissioner Jerry Jones chairman and fellow Republican Leslie Collier vice chairman. At their first meeting, the new board named a doctor to the county health board and created a joint liaison committee to improve relations with the new board of education.

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When you finish reading THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

## Jan. 16 Deadline For Fishery Proposals

Santa's work may be done, but the Jan. 16 deadline for the state's fishery resource grant applications is fast approaching.

If you have an innovative idea, but haven't put pen to paper yet, it's not too late to submit a proposal.

The N.C. General Assembly has made \$1 million available for the first year of the program, which provides money to people who want to do research to enhance the state's fishery resources—either by testing new equipment, researching industry trends, performing environmental pilot studies or studying other fisheries issues.

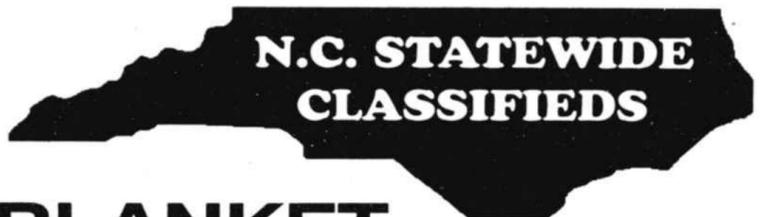
State officials say grant money will be distributed as evenly as possible among the northern, Pamlico, central and southern coastal areas.

N.C. Sea Grant, the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries and the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission have held workshops and disseminated information to help applications understand the grant process and refine their ideas and proposals.

Applications are still available from the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (919/726-7021). Completed applications must be postmarked by Jan 16 and mailed to DMF Director, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City NC 28557. The Marine Fisheries Commission will recommend projects to be funded.

For technical advice or more information, call the regional directors of the division or Jim Murray, N.C. Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service director, (919)515-2454.

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